

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 4:</b> Assessment	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2008
	<b>Section 8:</b> Entry into Home or Facility	<b>Version:</b> 2

## POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may make in-person contact with a child in his/her home or any other place where the child may be.

DCS **is required to seek permission** to enter a **home** for the purpose of conducting interviews and/or assessing the home's condition. Permission to enter must be given by an **adult** living in the home. Children under the age of 18 years cannot give permission to enter the home.

**Exception:** DCS may only enter without permission when accompanied by Law Enforcement Authority (LEA).

If one adult who lives in a home gives permission to enter, and a second adult who lives in the home verbally objects, DCS will not enter the home and will instead seek a court order.

DCS reserves the right to revoke a foster home license if denied access to a foster home.

DCS is required to check in, present DCS issued identification, request permission from an Administrator (e.g. - Director/and or Program Coordinator, Principal, etc.)and/or follow all written protocols when entering **schools, child care centers, residential facilities, emergency shelters or shelter care facilities, medical facilities or correctional facilities** for the purpose of conducting interviews.

DCS may request an order from the Juvenile Court if admission to a **home** or **facility** is denied. If an order from the Court is granted, DCS will gain entry by accompanying LEA when LEA executes the order.

DCS will not enter a home if there is suspicion that it contains a meth lab (see [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)).

**Permission to enter** a home or facility will **not constitute consent to interview** a child. DCS will seek permission to interview a child in accordance with the policies, [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#) and [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#).

DCS will immediately contact LEA and request emergency assistance if a child is believed to be home alone **and** it is believed the child's safety and well-being is in danger.

### Code References

[IC 31-33-8-7 Scope of Investigation; order for access to home, school or other place](#)

## PROCEDURE

**Note:** Prior to entering a home or facility for the purposes of conducting an interview with a **child**, the FCM will follow procedures contained in separate policies, [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#) and [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#).

Prior to entering a home or facility the FCM will:

1. Ask to speak to an adult in the house (or facility personnel);
2. Introduce himself/herself and show official DCS identification;
3. Explain the purpose of the visit without revealing any confidential information about the CA/N assessment;
4. Seek permission to enter if a home (follow visitor check-in procedures if a facility).
5. Document permission given to enter home or facility and by whom.

Upon entering a **home** the FCM will:

1. Exit the home immediately and without alarming the persons inside if at any time he/she suspects the home may contain a meth lab. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Child Response Protocol](#).
2. Discontinue the assessment if at any point the FCM becomes concerned for his/her safety (e.g. - persons in the home become hostile or threatening or there are other dangerous conditions in the home). Seek Supervisory input to make alternate arrangements to complete the necessary interview(s) and/or home conditions assessment.

If access to a home or facility is denied, the FCM will:

1. Request an order from the Juvenile Court to gain admission to the home/facility; and
2. If Court Order is granted, return to the home/facility with LEA, who will execute the Court Order and gain admission.
3. Notify the entity responsible for licensing the home (DSC local office or LCPA) if denied entry to a licensed foster home.
4. Document that the request was denied and who denied the request.

## RELATED INFORMATION

### **Home**

For the purpose of this policy, “home” means home, foster home, relative home or licensed child care home.

### **Facility**

For the purpose of this policy, “facility” means a facility or institution, including, but not limited to, a school, child care center, registered childcare ministry, group home, inpatient (residential) treatment center, hospital, emergency shelters, shelter care facilities, juvenile detention center and Indiana Department of Corrections facility.

## FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A